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SUBJECT: SMALL VOICE, WEAK LEADERSHIP: SPLM NUBA ON EDGE

REF: A. 08 KHARTOUM 1455

1B. 08 KHARTOUM 1435

1C. 08 KHARTOUM 1427

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. The Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the Nuba Mountains appears to lack leadership and has not effectively advocated for itself with the SPLM National Secretariat in Juba nor with the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Khartoum. It also appears to lack a vision for what it wants to gain through elections or through the popular consultation. The result of this passivity and incoherence is that the party has become ineffective in Southern Kordofan. UN and National Congress Party (NCP) Officials alike say that the SPLM Nuba have a "shocking" lack of capacity, but they also acknowledge that NCP-SPLM mechanisms for CPA implementation in Southern Kordofan are weak. These structural weaknesses are particularly dangerous in Southern Kordofan because of its fragile position along the north/south border near Abyei as well as South Darfur. Tension is exacerbated by the presence of precious petroleum resources and historic disputes between African and Arab tribes, especially during annual livestock migrations. Recently the NCP has intensified its arming of Arab tribes in and around Southern Kordofan to protect oil interests, supposedly against JEM - and potentially to protect the regime if President Bashir's indictment by the ICC leads to conflict along the North-South border. There are a number of things that can be done to try to improve governance in Southern Kordofan and develop the SPLM Nuba as a political force in the state. While most of the onus to improve the situation falls on the harried SPLM National Secretariat (and on the NCP to avoid further destabilizing the situation in Southern Kordofan), there are steps the USG can take to assist groups in the area, strengthen the SPLM Nuba, prevent miscommunication between the CPA partners, and equip them to govern more effectively. End Summary.

ARMING OF ARAB TRIBES IN AND AROUND SOUTHERN KORDOFAN
INTENSIFIES

12. (C) In January, SPLM Deputy Speaker of the Southern Kordofan State Legislature Saddig Mansour showed to USAIDoff and poloff what appeared to be Government of National Unity (GNU) Ministry of Defense (MoD) directives which called for the robust arming of Arab militias in and around Southern Kordofan (reflets). Mansour told poloff on 26 January that the directives, dated 24 November 2008, were obtained by an NCP Southern Kordofan State-native working at the MoD. The documents state that the MoD distributed 9,684 AK-47 machine guns, 232 Garnove machine guns, eight 12.7mm heavy machine guns, and 27 82mm mortars to tribal militia leaders in Southern Kordofan and its surrounding areas in 2008.

According to the directives, those receiving weapons included former Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) officers, former and current Personal Defense Force (PDF) officers, and National Congress Party (NCP) leaders in Southern Kordofan, Northern Kordofan, White Nile, and South Darfur. The weapons were distributed to individuals of the following tribes: Ma'alia, Hamar, Gamee, Hawazma/Bedaria, Awlad Hamid, Tandality, Dajo, Liri, Jalaba, Jalaba Hawra, Tagali, Misseriya Hamer, Misseriya Zurug, Habania, Jawama, Riziegat, Nuba Shat, Taisha/Salamat, and Aiatga. Mansour warned that the arming of these groups is an "emergency issue" which threatens the peace and stability of Southern Kordofan. He surmised that the NCP is strengthening its security mechanisms and putting its forces on "full alert" in and around Southern Kordofan ahead of an ICC indictment of GNU President Al-Bashir and 2009 elections. The NCP also fears a bold attempt by the JEM Darfur rebel movement to link their struggle with tensions in Kordofan.

¶3. (C) Mansour told poloff that he and several other SPLM Southern Kordofan leaders, including Deputy Governor Daniel Kodi and State Secretary Arnu Kalo, were in Khartoum to raise the issue of insecurity with GNU officials. Mansour said that the NCP wants to control the outcome of the elections so that the state's national assembly (currently 55 percent NCP and 45 percent SPLM per the CPA) will continue to have an NCP majority going into the sensitive Southern Kordofan popular consultation of 2011. "We (the SPLM in the Nuba mountains) refuse to have elections in such an environment," said Mansour. Mansour warned that if the NCP were to put up a fight with the Nuba, the Nuba "would not give up easily." He said that the people of the Nuba Mountains "will unite to defend themselves and to preserve their identity." "We are not like the people of the East, the North, or Darfur," he continued. He asked for the international community's support in protecting the Nuba people. (Note: During poloff's meeting with Mansour on 26 January in the lobby of the Burj Al-Fateh Hotel, Mansour was accompanied by a bodyguard - an atypical thing for a relatively low-level SPLM official. During the meeting, poloff and Mansour were observed and photographed by what appeared to be National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) agents who overtly lurked over the second floor balcony and walked immediately up to the table where the meeting was taking place. Mansour told poloff that he was being watched and followed because of the sensitive MoD documents he had obtained. End Note.)

NO VOICE AND WEAK LEADERSHIP PLAGUE THE SPLM NUBA

¶4. (C) Mansour expressed frustration that the SPLM National Secretariat in Juba is dragging its feet in responding to the concerns of its party comrades in Southern Kordofan. Juba "is aware" of the NCP's tactics in and around Southern Kordofan, but the "SPLM's actions (to correct the problem) will come too late" and "our people will be lost like those of Darfur," lamented Mansour. "Juba is thinking only of secession; we don't know how they feel about the Three Areas," explained Mansour. He expressed disappointment that SPLM Party Chairman Salva Kiir Mayardit hasn't recently visited the Nuba Mountains and said that Juba's financial support of the SPLM Nuba's political activities is very weak. The relationship between the SPLM in the Nuba Mountains and the SPLM National Secretariat is "not so strong," lamented Mansour. The Nuba people are very confused between the North (NCP) and the South (SPLM) because they feel like Southern Kordofan is "hanging" in between the two sides with very little commitment from either national party, he explained. Unfortunately, Nuba leaders are not in a decision-making capacity in the SPLM, said Mansour. (Note: SPLM high-level official Abdel Aziz Al-Helou is from the Nuba Mountains, but works more on Darfur than Southern Kordofan at the national level. End note.)

¶5. (C) During a January 28-30 trip to Kauda, Southern Kordofan, poloff met with SPLM leaders in the formerly-controlled SPLA/M area to discuss CPA implementation in the state and the party's goals ahead of 2009 elections. The officials included the SPLM Chairperson for Rashad County Younan Al Babaroud Ajour, the SPLM Secretary of Education for

Rashad County Abdel Hamid, and the Acting Commissioner of Rashad County Al Nur Bortel. They, too, described the confusion that many SPLM Nuba had by being administratively run out of the North (per the CPA), but being politically managed by the South (SPLM Juba). The county leaders expressed frustration that there is not a point person representing Nuba interests with authority at the SPLM National Secretariat in Juba. While Dr. Anne Itto, Deputy Secretary of the SPLM Southern Sector, is organizationally responsible for the Nuba Mountains portfolio within the party, SPLM Nuba leaders complained that she only spent one day at the Southern Kordofan Leadership Council meeting in Jau in December where outstanding issues of the state were discussed among SPLM leadership.

¶6. (C) Rashad county SPLM leaders also expressed frustration at the lack of CPA implementation in Southern Kordofan State (reflets). "People on the ground are not happy with CPA implementation" in Southern Kordofan, they said. "Integration has been a failure of our government." Leaders claimed that the 1500 police from the formerly-controlled SPLA/M areas which were selected for integration by the Southern Kordofan state government in August 2008 were still waiting to be trained in locations such as Khartoum, El Obeid, Kadugli, Medani, and Atbara. According to the SPLM officials, the reason for the training delay is intentional. "The NCP doesn't want them around (Southern Kordofan State) during elections," they claimed. The officials said that the thousands of SPLA police not identified for integration had returned home to the eastern jebels and are working voluntarily in policing roles in their local communities. As far as civil service integration goes, the Rashad county officials said that the state government collected upwards of 4,000 civil service applications from residents in the area in August 2008, but that nothing has happened since. SPLM officials in Kauda claimed that Arab tribes in Rashad County are "well-armed" and that the Governor (who was formerly a part of the NCP's security apparatus or NISS) had a part in this. They said that the Joint Defense Board (JDB) had not dealt with the issue of insecurity in the Nuba Mountains. SPLM officials also spent a great deal of time complaining about the move of several NGOs out of Kauda and to Kadugli in support of integration. While they described the popular consultation on CPA implementation as their "only escape" and the need to win state elections to influence the popular consultation, they were unable to coherently describe the SPLM Nuba strategy for upcoming elections.

NCP REP CLAIMS ENTIRE NCP-SPLM MECHANISM FOR SOUTHERN KORDOFAN IS WEAK

¶7. (C) Poloff met with NCP Speaker of the Southern Kordofan State Legislature Ibrahim Balandiya at his home in Kadugli on 30 January. Contrary to what SPLM officials in Kauda had said, Balandiya claimed that progress on police integration and training is moving forward. He confirmed that the police would return to Southern Kordofan state to assume their roles once their training ended. On the status of civil service integration, he admitted that things were not moving forward. Balandiya claimed that the SPLM's request for the number of its people to be integrated into the civil service had ballooned from 1500 to 8000. Furthermore, the state had not been provided with any money to facilitate civil service integration over and above the two percent of oil revenue it receives each year. He affirmed that the Governor of Southern Kordofan, Deputy Governor Kodi, and his own deputy (Saddiq Mansour) were in Khartoum to discuss not only the issue of insecurity, but of finance, integration, and the question of who would assume the governorship role in July 2009 if elections did not take place by that date. (Note: The CPA states that the governorship of Southern Kordofan should be rotational, with each party holding the Office of Governor for half of the pre-election period.). Balandiya emphasized that the "mechanism for the implementation of the CPA" was weak in Southern Kordofan, and later clarified that the true weakness comes directly from the NCP and SPLM leadership in the state. He also expressed frustration at

the lack of knowledge and experience the state assembly members have about governing. There is little knowledge among the members of state parliament (MPs) about simple things like debating, drafting and discussing the budget, and submitting program proposals, said Balandiya. He urged poloff for the USG to find some way to train the MPs in these fields, particularly given the unusual situation of Southern Kordofan where, unlike other state legislatures that are mostly SPLM or NCP-dominated, the CPA peace partners must work together to get things accomplished. Furthermore, the newly-elected state legislature will have to manage the popular consultation, a highly emotional and politically-charged event where the potential for disappointment will be high.

UN'S ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN KORDOFAN

8.(C) Poloff and USAIDoff met with Karen Tchalian, Head of UNMIS Sector IV, on January 27 in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan.

Tchalian, a Russian who has been head of Sector IV for two years, described the formerly-closed SPLA/M areas of Kauda and Julud as "still closed," even to UNMIS at times. These guys have a "fortress mentality," said Tchalian. He admitted that neither the SPLM nor the NCP have great capacity in Southern Kordofan, but said that the SPLM's lack of capacity is "shocking." When the Executive is absent on the SPLM side (Deputy Governor Daniel Kodi), there is a great lack of performance on behalf of the SPLM. Tchalian characterized the foundation of the SPLM in Southern Kordofan as a problem and said that the state secretariat "cannot formulate objectives to pursue." We don't see them as "pro" or "con" anything, said Tchalian. All we hear from them is "an endless litany of complaints" and they lash out against Juba, the internationals, the UN, and the NCP. For them, "no one is good enough," said the UNMIS Sector IV Chief. The SPLM Nuba must decide and articulate what it is they want for their people in Southern Kordofan, particularly as a result of the popular consultation - complete autonomy (not currently possible per the CPA) or special administrative status. The burden to frame these issues is not on the NCP, he explained, because Southern Kordofan is already part of the North.

¶9. (C) Tchalian said that UNMIS has "no real confirmation" of the arming of Arab tribes in Southern Kordofan. He explained that the 1500 integrated troops were "still being trained." Tchalian described civil service integration as "not moving", just as SPLM and NCP officials had. According to Tchalian, the SPLM's request for the number of people to be integrated into the civil service had risen from 1500 to 4400 to 8400 to 9500, at which point the NCP Governor of Southern Kordofan put a stop to this and appointed a three-person committee, headed by Deputy Governor Kodi, to establish baselines for the integration process. Tchalian said that SPLA troops at Lake Abiad were supposed to move further south to Unity State in January 2009, but that this hasn't happened yet. (Note: The SPLM Nuba are very skeptical of UNMIS Sector IV. They accuse UNMIS of being in cahoots with the NCP and refusing to verify specific incidents where the NCP (or Arab tribes) is negatively involved. The Head of UNMIS Sector IV is Russian and his Head of Civil Affairs is Somali. Sector IV is also home to an Egyptian battalion. The SPLM Nuba of UNMIS is derived from the historic tradition of these nations being NCP sympathizers. End Note.)

COMMENT

¶10. (C) Significant challenges still exist in Southern Kordofan with regard to insecurity, integration, and governance. The latest trip by pol and usaidoffs to the region highlights the disappointing and worrisome inability of the SPLM Nuba to function effectively as a party at the state level, communicate its concerns to the SPLM National Secretariat in Juba, and articulate its goals to the people of Southern Kordofan. All of these things will become even more of a problem as elections, the popular consultation, and the southern Sudan referendum approach. To exacerbate the problem, the harried and over-stretched SPLM National

Secretariat does not seem to be prioritizing the concerns of its people in the Nuba Mountains in Juba or at the national level. This only angers the SPLM Nuba further, causing them to be even more isolated from the broader SPLM. Given the many challenges in this region, we propose several steps to avoid a return to violence. First, the SPLM needs an effective advocate to communicate the concerns of the Nuba to party headquarters in Juba and to the GNU in Khartoum (SPLM Governor Malik Agar plays this role in Blue Nile State). The USG could encourage the SPLM to identify an individual to take responsibility for leadership on Nuba mountains issues. Secondly, the SPLM Nuba could benefit from political party capacity building on internal party democracy and leadership, intra-party conflict mitigation, effective intra-party and external communication, and sensitization of party leaders to their roles. Through its implementing partner the International Republican Institute (IRI), USAID has done similar training with parties in the South and plans to expand such assistance to parties in the North and in particular, Southern Kordofan. This training is critical before 2009 national elections. Finally, the USG could provide management and governance advisors to the Southern Kordofan state legislature so that MPs could better understand and carry out their roles (though getting the NCP to approve the use of advisors could prove difficult and will need to be negotiated at a high level in advance). While no particular step is a panacea to avoiding conflict in this troubled and ignored region, particularly given the NCP's meddling and apparent arming of Arab groups, improving governance and SPLM capacity would be a good first step to addressing the concerns of the Nuba people. End comment.

FERNANDEZ